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MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1909.

MR. TAFT AND BIRMINGHAM'S "SHACKLES."

Speaking for a delegation, which came to invite Mr. Taft to visit Birmingham, General Rufus N. Rhodes thus addressed the President-elect:

"The thing of all things you want is that you may come there and—though a Democrat and a lifelong Democrat—I am willing to say—I will strike off our shackles, the shackles of an ignorant political system."

Does General Rhodes really want that? Does the city of Birmingham, in fact, need the services of an Ohio Republican to help it strike off its political shackles, whatever they are? If so, we have hitherto overestimated the spirit and the character of that enterprising Southern city.

The Times-Dispatch regards talk of this sort, which we have heard in various directions of late, as inappropriate in the extreme, and as altogether unjustified by any facts. It is a direct confession from the South of its own political incompetence. Mr. Taft said that General Rhodes's hospitable ebullience was "very sweet music to me." Naturally it would be. So far as Birmingham is concerned, it was a striking corroboration, from a prominent Southern source, of his own blunt suggestion that the South is not adequate to manage its affairs.

This newspaper has been offended by these unwarranted reflections. It has resented the frequent implications, whether from Mr. Taft or from other Northern spokesmen, that "the South" is existing in a certain dark condition vaguely known as "political bondage," from which it is powerless to extricate itself without the assistance of kindly hands from above.

The Times-Dispatch regards these suggestions as an affront to the character and intelligence of the South. But it is difficult to repudiate such impudence with any degree of effectiveness if Southern men are content to embrace it as living and entrenched truth.

The voice of these men, we make no doubt, is the voice of the "Independent clubs," confused and embarrassed by the progress of expedient migration from the party that reconstructed their country for them. Mr. Taft has seen wisely and far. But we venture to take issue with him, and with our integrated Northern contemporaries, and with General Rufus N. Rhodes. The South is not as they courteously suggest, the dark continent of politics. It is not populated wholly by blind men, thickwits and imbeciles. It is, on the contrary, altogether capable of re-making its political creeds on occasion, as it has remade the whole structure of its civilization, with no schoolmaster's leading from abroad.

THE TAX ON ART.

From a protective standpoint, the tariff on art has always been one of the crowning absurdities in the Dingley bill. From a revenue standpoint it has been a disappointment from the beginning. We were told that it would net the government \$1,000,000 annually. In the first year of its operation it netted \$236,242.75. After eleven years of operation it netted in 1905 less than \$500,000. As an income producer it is insignificant, and American artists, the only class which it could conceivably benefit protectively, have repudiated it from the beginning.

It is the common policy of governments to foster and encourage the fine arts. The United States is the one civilized country in the world to pursue an opposite policy. Free importations of foreign paintings deprive artistic sensibilities, help to create a demand for paintings of all sorts, and so, in the end, work directly in the interests of home talent. It is absurd to imagine any "competition" between Reynolds and Rembrandt, for instance, and Mr. John Sargent. Moreover, the development of the artistic sense and skill has a distinct industrial relation. In his hearing before the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Carroll Beckwith, himself a prominent portrait painter, told of an American girl who decorated some cotton cloth with a simple floral design. Her work increased the value of this cloth from 4 cents to 75 cents a yard, at which price it had a large sale. The incident is doubtless trifling, but it shows that the promotion of art work has something more than an esthetic point.

Representative Gaines is authority for the statement that the one question which the tariff revisers will have to pass upon is as to whether the educational and industrial advantages of free art are worth the \$600,000 in revenue. This is reducing genius to terms of the counting-room with a vengeance. It ignores all such sentimental considerations as America's unhappy emulства as a discourager of art. It is to

be hoped that other members of the committee will take a less mathematical view, and evidence supports the hope. Chairman Payne will not oppose the cancellation of the duty. Messrs. Dalzell, Boutell and Longworth altogether favor it; and the prospect is excellent that the new tariff bill will be free of this shining bit of foolishness.

NORTHERN ALARM OVER VIRGINIA DEMOCRACY.

We feel in position to reassure the anxiety of the New York Sun in the matter of the management of the Democratic party in this State. Rumors have reached the Sun that Virginia Democrats who did not vote for Mr. Bryan last November are going to be summarily ejected from the party, never again to muster under their ancient standard. The Sun regards this proposal as a "crazy expedient" and an "insolent overture" respectively, and diagnoses it as "a very promising vista of Democratic disaster in the Old Dominion."

These narratives of "it-is-heard" and "report-has-it" apparently new in Park Row, are a month old here. Nobody in Virginia, so far as we have ascertained, is "seriously discussing" them, as the Sun is informed. Nobody in authority ever did. Soon after the election, it is true, a sketchy news story went North which hinted that the proposal which has stirred the Sun's resentment was under consideration. Even then that report had less to do with the State of Virginia than with this city, where Taft demonstrations had served to stir up some transient counter-feeling. It was based principally on the alleged views of the new chairman of the Richmond Democratic Committee. This gentleman has long since punctured the story by disclaiming any such views. He has been at pains to define his conception of party membership, and that conception is based wholly on identity of political creed and not at all on past performances.

We think there is no one in Virginia who is now discussing the "crazy expedient" mentioned by the Sun. We believe there is no party leader in the State who would seriously urge the "insolent overture." We are confident that there is no prospect whatever of a grand re-making of the party on the basis of fealty or non-fealty to Mr. Bryan.

THE CHAIN-PRAYER, AGAIN.

The Times-Dispatch is informed that the so-called "chain-prayer," which enjoyed a certain popularity in Richmond two years ago, is now having a recrudescence among us. Write out a prayer and mail it to a friend, with the request that he follow your example; do this every day for ten days, and on the tenth day you will receive a great blessing. We believe this is how the program runs. The origination of this odd idea was first ascribed to Bishop Lawrence, of Massachusetts. Bishop Lawrence has denied, with some emphasis, that he has any connection with it whatever. So, we believe, has every other "eminent divine" upon whom, in turn, it has been attempted to affix the responsibility. Each one of them has flatly disclaimed the paternity of the chain-prayer idea.

Writing prayers and sending them to friends who seem to need them is a wholly innocent pastime. It may even sometimes accomplish genuine spiritual benefit. But, that our readers may understand the exact facts, it has seemed well that the assumptions of the unknown promoters of this particular plan should be pointed out. No bishop, archbishop or pope is back of it, nor does ecclesiastical dignity of any sort stand guaranty for the arrival of the tenth day blessing.

The superb sausage of Henrico county is now playing daily to standing room only in all the sausage circuits of Virginia. Usually at these ceremonies the golden brown Solly Lunas may be seen sitting demurely on the side.

Uncle Andrew Carnegie insists that poor men are happiest. We know of one or two high-grade poor men who would be willing to let Uncle Andrew take that theory at his own expense.

The esteemed Washington Herald prints an editorial article on "The Passing of Fugitives." It is a good article, but, in our opinion, missing isn't nearly as important as the left hooks of pugilism.

We have it on good authority that Hon. Theodore Burton is not indulging in any jeremiads over the withdrawal of that Cabinet proposition by Mr. Taft.

We have noted the Boston Herald's inquiry as to what is the matter with Boston, but unhappily the space dimensions of a daily newspaper make it impossible for us to attempt any reply.

"The average woman's hat" may cost only \$5, as Hon. Champ Clark thinks, but the machiner of it is that there aren't any average women any more.

Messrs. Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison don't think much of the grade of free speech which costs six months and up.

It isn't much use to turn over a new leaf unless you remember to gum down the old one.

In the end suffragette's husbands usually learn how to darn.

Instead of working out vice versa, it was Beech Hargis who hung the jury.

Borrowed Jingles

IN THE WINDS.
 I was makin' a dhop iv potheen
 In the wind at the fut iv
 As the gray iv the evenin' slid
 An' covered myself an'

I was waitin' for Patsy McCann
 That lives on the edge iv
 He always comes over iv me a hun'
 An' keep a lookout for

'Tis time he was here be now,
 I was thinkin' an' sayin'

When into the wind dashed a big roanney
 An' frightened me out iv
 "Oh, the devil go wid ye," I cried,
 As she made an attack on

"Is it me that's the devil?" a sweet voice
 From the whins at the fut iv
 "I was bringin' her home from below,
 When the other she broke an'

"I think I heard a sweet lil' iv
 A laugh
 "Och, Meira mavrounne," said I,
 "There's wan thing I'll tell ye

Be me sowl, it spakes well for the baste's
 For 't land on the tap iv
 "After iv the geelers, ashore?"
 Well, iv course they could gi' me

They might capture me still, but yerself has
 done ovver,
 For, mavrounne, ye've captured
 Me heart

Then the still-fire smoldered av
 An' the cow roamed around av
 An' sweet Mofra said what I axed her iv
 In the whins at the fut iv

—Westminster Gazette.

MEREELY JOKING.

Two Delerents.
 First Tramp: You won't get nothing decent here; them people are vegetarians.
 Second Tramp:—Is that right?
 First Tramp: Yes, and they've got a dog wot ain't—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Useless Luck.
 "The unlucky in love are said to be lucky at cards."
 "What good does it do 'em? They can't get out nights to play!"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Considerate Even to Her Face.
 "Millicent is truly a considerate girl," said the daniel with the extended Psycho Knot.
 "What makes you think so?" asks the one with the shiny nose.
 "She has a handkerchief in her pocket, so she has had the druggist mix perian with her face powder!"—Life.

Misunderstood.
 Bell-D-I-I understood you to say that the dentist overcharged you?
 Well—Yes, he charged me enough gas to inflate a balloon.—Kansas City Journal.

The Whist Tongue.
 Mrs. Meek:—What do you trump my ace?
 Mrs. M.—Yes! What of it?
 Mr. M.—Nothing, my dear, I'm glad it is you. If one of our opponents had done it, we'd have lost the trick.—Cleveland Leader.

Unappreciated Forbearance.
 "Your husband says that when he is angry he always counts ten before he speaks," said one woman.
 "I wish he'd stop it. Since he got dyspepsia, home seems nothing but a class in arithmetic!"—Tit-Bits.

FACT AND FABLE.
 The Secret Service has grown to such proportions that foreigners will soon be referring to this country as Little Russia.—New York World.

"Talk about me, write about me; I don't care what you say. Merely keep me in the public eye," said the late P. T. Barnum. Still, he has never come to Congress and indulged in the luxury of a correspondence with Mr. John Archbold.—Washington Herald.

A London statistician figured it out yesterday that Italy had lost \$20,000,000 in the war. He is even betting that she has no loss today than she had yesterday, anyhow.—Baltimore American.

Castro says he has always been the slave of honor and duty, which shows that the man who has not been a slave to a saving sense of humor.—Washington Post.

There are ominous signs that President Roosevelt will go out of office skidding.—Charleston News and Courier.

The framers of the tariff are doubtless doing their worst so that it can be skied, long live it!—Indianapolis News.

The New Year will have an auspicious opening in the evacuation of Cuba, the consummation of unparalleled national generosity.—New York World.

When all of the nominations for Mr. Taft's cabinet are in, we shall have a complete list of the people of political prominence in this country.—Washington Post.

PERSONAL AND GENERAL.
 There were only seven meals known in the days of Columbus. Now there are fifty-five in use.—New York World.

Castro was President of Venezuela for nine years, and during that period there was something going on most of the time. A judge in New York has ruled that a husband has no just grounds for leaving his home simply because his wife is a poor cook.

New Jersey is again agitating the plan of abolishing her Negroes. She also says starts it as soon as her awnings are frozen over.

A judge at Atlantic City fined a man \$100 for stopping on a woman's head while she was singing in the choir of a church.

Recent statistics collected in Berlin say that the average man has a sufficient seventh of his income each year for intoxicating drinks.

Some of the rich natives at Canton, China, have decided to give the city a public hospital equipped with all the latest European improvements.

It is said that if it were not for the influx of people from New England and the West that New York would soon be a city of foreign-born people.

Now some of the papers in the West seem to think that the first thing Mr. Roosevelt will do when he arrives in Africa will be to eat a raw cannibal.

It is understood that a beautiful new stained-glass window is soon to be put in the Sistine chapel. It is a gift from the prince regent of Bavaria to the Pope.

In the Fathian villages of Afghanistan an imported magazine is sold at a shade more than its worth over \$250, while a modern revolver is quoted at over \$150.

A number of prominent actors have been engaged at Paris to appear at a shadow play. It will be a novelty with, of course, everything done in pantomime.

The government of Austria makes special inducements to farmers who reclaim waste lands and make use of them.

Sentiment Against Grati.

In view of the sentence imposed upon Abraham Ruef, the San Francisco writer of "Fugitives" is in a position to fear that they may also have melted out to them stern justice.

Importation of Henney, the special prosecutor for the San Francisco cases, by Pittsburgh has been denied by Henney, who declares that he has sufficient work cut out for him without pre-empting about the country looking for jobs in prosecuting criminals.

The work of looking for criminals at home has by no means been completed, and the interest of the people is at white heat. The "Fugitives" is the last resort of the convicted man, and the fact that he is not in the lower court, he will go behind the bars for a long term given him.—Baltimore American.

The Courts of Europe.

By La Marquise de Fontenay.

American Success to Peacemaking.
 HENRY EDWARD BELLOW, now eighty years of age, who, since his marriage, first, to one daughter of Duke Villars, and then to another, who, afterwards to the other daughter, has made his home in the United States, has been the subject of a biography, which, though the author is a Frenchman, is a very interesting and valuable work.

But that idea is becoming obsolete through education. The successful farmer to-day is not a man who inherits from his father's acres, but a man who has acquired a large acreage have been to the Virginia farmers a humiliation about their necks. They are poor now.

Here in Virginia we possess the hereditary right of land, less than a hundred acres is no farm at all, and that it is simply impossible to get a living from the soil. The members of the family, as a rule, are not engaged in any other occupation, and the family is able to cultivate the land. The great economic question of the day is the elimination of waste, and especially the waste of human labor.—Roanoke Times.

Effect of "Dry" Vote.
 In ninety days, due to the saloons and breweries going out of business in Roanoke, that city will lose over 1,500 men employed in such businesses, and the mail order business of the city will increase, while the money which has been going there heretofore will be elsewhere.—Roanoke Advance.

The More Shot.
 When a political party has a sore and does not proceed to heal it, but lets it run, the time comes when it brings on a very sick spell, and the party suffers grievously. The Democratic party of Virginia has a sore of this sort just now, and it is the primary.

The primary we have always thought would be a good institution if properly planned, as now constituted we do not regard it as a good thing, but the contrary. Many of us who believe in the primary have begged for changes in it, and we have been told that the primary is a necessary part of the government. The Democratic party of Virginia has a sore of this sort just now, and it is the primary.

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STATE PRESS

Farming Suggestions.
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